

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06  
ACDA-07 AID-05 /090 W  
-----191116 112042 /22

P 191015Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4363  
INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL  
AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ  
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 2381

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR MILI UR EC PE IS  
SUBJECT: PROBABLE SOVIET INTEREST IN ARMS SALES TO ECUADOR

REF: (A) STATE 032517 (NOTAL), (B) QUITO 1014

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. EMBASSY BELIEVES SOVIETS WOULD RESPOND POSITIVELY TO TARGET OF OPPORTUNITY REPRESENTED BY ANY ECUADOREAN INTEREST IN ACQUISITION OF ALTERNATE AIRCRAFT TO KFIR. SOVIETS WOULD PROCEED CAUTIOUSLY, HOWEVER, TO PROVIDE TIME TO ASSESS RESTRAINING FACTORS OF PERUVIAN AND U.S. REACTION TO SUCH A MOVE. EMBASSY DOUBTS SOVIETS WOULD OFFER MIG-23 AND SIMPLY DOES NOT BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE INTERESTED IN SUPPLYING MIG-25. MORE LIKELY AIRCRAFT WOULD BE MIG-21 OR PERHAPS EXPORT VERSION OF SU-17 WHICH HAS COME TO BE KNOWN AS SU-20/22. END SUMMARY.

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2. ALTHOUGH SOVIETS WILL PROBABLY MOVE VERY CAUTIOUSLY FOLLOWING ANY APPROACH BY ECUADOR TO PURCHASE FIGHTER AIRCRAFT, WE BELIEVE THEY WOULD BE STRONGLY ATTRACTED TO THE PROSPECT OF ADDITIONAL SALES TO THIS AREA WHERE U.S. INFLUENCE HAS BEEN SO DOMINANT IN PAST. THEY WILL UNDOUBTEDLY LOOK ON ANY SALES AS A POLITICAL ACT AND WILL HENCE CONSIDER ITS POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

CAREFULLY BEFORE DECIDING. IN THIS REGARD, THEIR ENTHUSIASM WILL BE TEMPERED BY THEIR PERCEPTION OF HOW SUCH A SALE WILL AFFECT, IN THE FIRST INSTANCE, THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE PERUVIANS AND OTHER L.A. NATIONS; AND, SECONDLY, THE U.S. ASSUMING THE SOVIETS BELIEVE THE COST TO THEIR RELATIONS WITH LIMA AND WASHINGTON TO BE ACCEPTABLE, WE THINK THEY MIGHT VERY WELL MAKE AN OFFER ON GENEROUS TERMS TO ECUADOR, WITH THE EXPECTATION OF SEVERAL GAINS: HARD CURRENCY, INCREASED INFLUENCE IN THE REGION, TWEAKING THE U.S. NOSE, AND ASSERTING MOSCOW'S ROLE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO U.S. ARMS SUPPLIERS ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA.

3. WE ARE NOT IN A GOOD POSITION IN MOSCOW TO ASSESS THE LIKELY REACTION OF THE PERUVIANS TO A SOVIET SALE TO ECUADOR, BUT WE ASSUME THAT IT WILL IN ANY CASE BE NEGATIVE. THE DEGREE OF PERU'S DISPLEASURE WILL DEPEND ON THE EXTENT OF THE SOVIET SALE. THE SOVIETS MIGHT RECKON THAT A MODEST DEAL INVOLVING A SMALL NUMBER OF EQUIVALENT, SU-22S WITH NO SIDE AGREEMENTS FOR AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL OR AIR DEFENSE COMPONENTS MIGHT GAIN RELUCTANT PERUVIAN ACCEPTANCE, WHILE A DRAMATIC DEAL (E.G., LARGE NUMBERS OF SU-22S OR MIG-21S) WITH MAJOR SIDE CONTRACTS FOR ASSOCIATED EQUIPMENT MIGHT CAUSE A SHOCK. THE SOVIETS WOULD ALSO HAVE TO CONSIDER HOW REACTIONS ELSEWHERE IN LATIN AMERICA MIGHT AFFECT FURTHER SOVIET ARMS SALE POSSIBILITIES.

4. WE BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WOULD TRY TO EXPLAIN AWAY  
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AN ECUADOREAN DEAL TO THE PERUVIANS AS AN ARMS LENGTH SALE OF "DEFENSIVE" AIRCRAFT (AND POSSIBLY OTHER SYSTEMS) WHICH WOULD IN NO WAY IMPLY A LESSENING OF THE SOVIET SUPPLY AND MAINTENANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH PERU. FURTHERMORE, THEY ARE LIKELY TO REJECT ANY SUGGESTION BY THE PERUVIANS THAT THEIR PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM CONTAINS ANY POLITICAL TIE OR COMMITMENT WHICH WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY A SALE TO ECUADOR. NONETHELESS, A SALE WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH THE PERUVIANS AND THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE TO WORK TO RESTORE THIS RELATIONSHIP TO NORMAL.

5. A SECONDARY POLITICAL FACTOR WILL BE SOVIET CALCULATIONS OF U.S. REACTIONS. AT THE TIME OF THE PERUVIAN ACQUISITIONS OF TANKS AND LATER SU-22 AIRCRAFT, U.S., TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE, MADE DEMARCHES ONLY TO CERTAIN L.A. COUNTRIES AND NOT TO THE SOVIETS. THE SOVIETS MUST HAVE CONSIDERED SUCH AN ATTITUDE AS LESS THAN DETERMINED OPPOSITION. THEY ARE LIKELY TO ASSUME THIS SITUATION STILL PREVAILS, ALTHOUGH THE NEW ADMINISTRATION'S PUBLIC

STATEMENTS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF LIMITING ARMS SALES AND ITS DECISION TO VETO THE KFIR SALE MAY INDUCE THE SOVIETS TO PROCEED MORE CAUTIOUSLY. IN ANY CASE, IF A DEAL IS AGREED, THEY WILL SURELY TREAT ANY U.S. OPPOSITION AS SOUR GRAPES AT HAVING LOST A PROFITABLE DEAL TO A COMPETITOR. THIS WILL BE THE CASE PARTICULARLY IF WE OFFER F-5'S TO THE ECUADOREANS.

6. BASED ON PAST SOVIET BEHAVIOR AND OUR PERCEPTION OF ECUADOREAN NEEDS, THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THE SOVIETS COULD OFFER EITHER THE MIG-21 OR THE EXPORT VERSION OF THE SU-17 WHICH HAS COME TO BE KNOWN AS THE SU-20/22. WE SERIOUSLY DOUBT THE SOVIETS WOULD OFFER THE MIG-23 WHICH HAS ONLY BEGUN TO BE SUPPLIED TO MOSCOW'S EASTERN EUROPEAN ALLIES AND WE SIMPLY DO NOT BELIEVE THE SOVIETS WOULD OFFER ECUADOR THE IMPRACTICAL MIG-25 AS SUGGESTED REF B, PARA 5. ADDITIONALLY, OFFERS OF THE HIGHER PERFORMANCE AIRCRAFT  
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WOULD INCREASE STRAINS WITH PERU.

7. WHILE EMBASSY QUITO IS BETTER ABLE THAN WE TO ASSESS RISE IN SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ECUADOR WHICH WOULD RESULT FROM SOVIET ARMS SALE, WE WONDER IF CONCERN EXPRESSED IN REF B, PARAS 7 AND 8, IS NOT EXAGGERATED, UNLESS AND UNTIL THE SOVIETS BECOME ECUADOR'S MAJOR SUPPLIER. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THE EXTENT OF ADDITIONAL SOVIET INFLUENCE IN PERU ATTRIBUTABLE DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY TO THEIR ARMS SALE THERE. AS WE SEE IT FROM HERE, THE SOVIET MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH PERU DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE GREATLY INCREASED MOSCOW'S INFLUENCE OVER THE PERUVIANS. WE DOUBT, GIVEN SOVIET EXPERIENCES IN SUPPLYING ARMS TO ARAB STATES, THAT SOVIETS HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF AMOUNT OF IMMEDIATE INFLUENCE THEY CAN BUY VIA ARMS SALES. OVER THE LONG TERM, HOWEVER, THEY MAY EXPECT TO GAIN DISTINCT BENEFITS AT OUR EXPENSE.  
TOON

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## Message Attributes

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